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SELF-CONCEPT OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR.
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THERE IS A NEED FOR COUNSELORS TO DEVELOP A VOCATIONAL SELF-CONCEPT WHICH WOULD SERVE AS A GUIDE DURING THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. BASED ON SUPER'S THEORY AND DEFINITIONS, THE CRITICAL POINTS IN COUNSELOR VOCATIONAL SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT INCLUDE THE EXPLORATORY, REALITY TESTING, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT STAGES. THE COUNSELOR VOCATIONAL-EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR ONTARIO, CANADA, ARE DISCUSSED, AND IT IS CONCLUDED THAT CHANGE IN THESE PROGRAMS IS NEEDED. CONFUSED SELF-IMAGES STEM FROM THE LACK OF AN IDENTITY AS WELL AS THE LACK OF A CLEARLY DEFINED ROLE FOR COUNSELORS. A NEW PLAN IS DESCRIBED WHICH ADVOCATES WORK AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL ON A FULL-TIME BASIS FOR A MINIMUM OF 2 YEARS. THE COURSE WORK WOULD BE DEVELOPED AROUND PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION WITH ADDITIONAL COURSES IN ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES. PRACTICUM UNDER SUPERVISION WOULD BE REQUIRED AND PERHAPS A SUPERVISED STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE. EXPOSURE TO RESEARCH WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL PREREQUISITE. IT IS FELT THAT SUCH A CHANGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES WOULD HELP FUTURE COUNSELORS DEFINE MORE EXACTLY WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEIR ROLE SHOULD BE. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ONTARIO SCHOOL COUNSELLOR'S ASSOCIATION (2D, DON MILLS, NOVEMBER 10-12, 1966). (AF)

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ONTARIO SCHOOL COUNSELLORS' ASSOCIATION

THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

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SELF-CONCEPT OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

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THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COUNSELLEE

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Addresses given
at the

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Don Mills, Ontario.

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SELF-CONCEPT OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

School counselling is a profession in development. Its practitioners, as is implied by the many titles under which we find them, are searching for an identity, a uniqueness, and a clearly defined role. That school counsellors are seeking distinction, meaning, competent productiveness and its due rewards is observable by counsellors and non-counsellors alike. Can it be said that many counsellors in schools today manifest in their everyday behavior an inadequately perceived identity of themselves and their role? Can it be said that school counselling today is a "garbage can profession"? The October 27 issue of The Woman's Globe and Mail contains one of many scathing articles about counsellors and their profession that appear periodically.

I believe that school counselling is a legitimate profession and that school counsellors can be professionals in their own right. I believe that not only is there a place for school counselling in today's society, it is indispensable. But it is not possible to reach the professional level in counselling without an understanding of vocational self-concept development as a counsellor and the importance of the selection and education of the counsellor.

In an attempt to present current thinking on self-concept development and my views on the importance of education in vocational self-concept development, a short historical perspective is necessary.

The counsellor's search for an identity is not too different from any professional's search for an identity. This is a characteristic that is common to all developing professions. "There are many and diverse "understandings' or viewpoints about counselling among counsellors themselves and certainly among non-counsellors". This quotation, taken from Webb's The Profession of Psychology in which I have substituted Counsellor for Psychologist, would be difficult to refute and there are probably many reasons why this is the case. Historically, education was the private reserve of the select few and it be-

came available to all only quite recently. Compulsory school attendance has now reached the sixteen year-old and some now insist it be raised to 18. The philosophy of education of the earlier ages was simple and dramatic, it was a "sink or swim" idea paralleling the Darwinian theory of "survival of the fittest". Today, we are no longer concerned with the few, or the survivors, we are now concerned with every single individual in the school, and as well as with the education of the out-of-school. Education is not only the responsibility of the school, the community at large is now deeply involved. These and other changes gradually exhausted the time, the energy, the resources and the competence of the teacher. Specialization was inevitable; the "generalist" had to give way. No longer could a teacher handle all the subject matter in a given grade level, no longer could the teacher attend to "the whole child", if ever he did. It was soon found that this had to be the responsibility of several people: teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, ministers of the Church, and more recently, counsellors, psychologists, social workers, etc. Naturally enough, counsellors emerged from the ranks of teachers, as physicians emerged from the ranks of barbers. Could it have been otherwise? However, as the role of teachers evolved, so has the role of counsellors, and teachers, as the only source of counsellors is no longer adequate. In days of the past, the slogan was "all teachers counsellors". The shift to "some teachers counsellors" and finally "the best teachers counsellors" reflects the gradual change in thinking. Are the counsellors of Ontario or elsewhere recruited from the ranks of the best teachers? Whether or not this is so, is this necessary, or even desirable? In the light of vocational self-concept development theory it is indeed questionable that teachers, even the best teachers, can become the best counsellors.

The education of school counsellors in earlier periods was non-existent as such. Counsellors were teachers, and therefore their education was obtained in the normal schools or teachers' colleges. Programs for school counsellors emerged slowly and in the main they were part-time studies offered by the same institutions in night or summer school extension programs. In Ontario, school counsellors have been recruited exclusively from the ranks of teachers and the summer programs of study offered by the Ontario College of Education, of the Department of Education, led to the Certificates: Elementary, Intermediate and Specialist. Recently, with the establishment of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, a new program for the education of school counsellors is being developed. However, counsellor education programs, not only school counselling, have also developed, and are presently developing in some of the institutions of higher learning, such as the University of Windsor, York University, the University of Waterloo, l'Universite Laval and l'Universite de Montreal. As some of you may know, and you will forgive me my saying so, the University of Ottawa, through its Faculty of Psychology and Education, has offered graduate programs of study in Psychology and Education since 1941. We are celebrating this year the University's twenty-fifth year in the preparation of teachers, psychologists and counsellors. Counsellor Education at the University of Ottawa was the subject of a paper I presented at a special invitational meeting this Spring at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I will spare you any further elaboration of our programs of study, however, I would be happy to discuss them with you in the question period following this presentation as may be required. This quick review of the past leads us to the topic of this paper, the Self-Concept of the school Counsellor. What is the self-concept? What are some of the factors that contribute to self-concept development? The hypothesis

of my presentation is that vocational self-concept development as a counsellor exists and it is my opinion that some programs of counsellor selection and education have impeded the process of counsellor vocational self-concept development. What I consider evidence supporting my hypothesis are: 1) an inadequate understanding of the dynamics of vocational choice and of theory of self-concept development by insisting that counsellors first become teachers; 2) a confusion of the roles of teachers and counsellors as can be inferred from such titles as "guidance teachers"; 3) the denial that non-teachers can become school counsellors; 4) an inadequate understanding of the reality that vocational self-concept development is partly an internalization process of knowledge and values requiring intensive study and practicum, hardly possible in one, two or even three summer school sessions.

From Career-Development: Self-Concept Theory, a work of such excellence that I find myself quoting or paraphrasing from it frequently, Super offers several definitions that can appropriately be presented here.

Self is simply what the person is, a being having personality, having its own identity, and which changes as it interacts with the total environment. Self-percepts are self-impressions emanating from the person's own senses, for instance, the perception of skin color, of size, etc...which are primary self percepts. Secondary, self-percepts or self-impressions are primary self-percepts that have acquired special significance because of their relationship with other percepts, or ideas, for example skin color in a racial group. These secondary self-percepts are self-concepts, self images which have acquired meaning and which have been related to other self-percepts. A self-concept is a self-picture, a picture of self in some role, some situation, performing some set of functions. There are

two levels of self-concepts, the lower level and the higher or complex level. The lower-level self-concept is one or a small number of related self-percepts, for instance, a person's concept of himself as thoughtful and analytical. The higher or complex level self-concept is an organized number of self-percepts within the framework of a role, for example, a person's concept of himself as a philosopher, or researcher, embodying the lower-level self-percepts of thoughtful and analytical in combination with several other self-percepts and generalized in the concept of philosopher or researcher.

The Self-Concept System is the organization of several self-concepts into a picture that the individual has of himself in different roles and in different types of situations. A person has several concepts of himself or self-percepts but only one self-concept system.

The Vocational Self-Concept is the constellation of self-concepts, self-attributes, considered by the individual to be vocationally relevant, whether or not they have been translated into a vocational preference. In other words, a person might see himself as a philosopher, or have the vocational self-concept researcher, without necessarily becoming one.

In the first page of that monograph, Super began as follows:

> "In expressing a vocational preference, a person puts into occupational terminology his idea of the kind of person he is; that in entering an occupation, he seeks to implement a concept of himself; that in getting established in an occupation he achieves self-actualization. The occupation thus makes possible the playing of a role appropriate to the self-concept."

Does a person expressing the vocational preference for Counselling put into occupational terminology his (her) idea of the kind of person he (she) is? Does a person entering the profession of counsellor seek to implement a concept of himself? Does a person getting established in the occupation Counsellor achieve self-actualization? Does the occupation Counsellor make possible the playing of a role appropriate to the self-concept?

Like you, I would very much like to think so. But what about the following statements? It might be imprudent to generalize from the following incidents, even if we hear them often, even if we read about them frequently. I have had many opportunities to listen to counsellors' descriptions of themselves and of their roles in the schools. That there was confusion, disillusionment, frustration, sometimes anger, sometimes defeat, was shockingly evident. Examples: "I am considered as the Principal's errand boy". "When the Principal is in a jam, for instance, the commencement exercise, whom do you think he appoints to handle it?" "In my school, the "guidance teacher" is the only one <u>who has the time</u> to collect for the Community Chest, or any other such drive for funds". "The Vice-Principal told me to get the SIFTO tests done as quickly as possible. That is what they call the S.A.T.O. tests, and anyway, I wonder why they want me to do it because they don't believe in tests anyway". "Do you really want to know how I got to be Guidance Teacher for Grades IX and X? Well, you won't believe this, but it's true. When the Principal asked me to take it, I told him I did not know anything about it and that I had specialized in French. He said: Young lady, you have the least seniority around here, and that's final".

I must admit, that at times, I think that the counsellor has really no one to blame but himself. I am tempted to think that he is fully responsible for the type of bed he has chosen to lie in. Then too, I must confess that sometimes I think that the Department of Education, the local Board of Education, the Administrative and/or Supervisory personnel literally make it impossible for <u>any</u> counsellor to define who he is and what he can do and cannot do. Some people do really think that counsellors are "miracle workers"; this is evident by the type of problems they expect him to solve, and the time and tools they are willing to give him to do it.

Are percepts such as these representative and are they significant? Are they perhaps only isolated incidents that need not even be mentioned? One would think upon reading the October 27 Globe and Mail that incidents such as these are general.

Stewart, in an article entitled A Bill of Rights for School Counsellors, which first appeared in the Personnel Guidance Journal, quotes several verbatim statements made by secondary school counsellors, the first one of which I will quote; "I never had such a frustrating job in all my life. I have no time to do real counselling".

I dared to recall some of these counsellor self-percepts on the assumption that they had some significance. There are of course percepts of counsellors and counsellor roles made by non-counsellors: students, parents, teachers, principals and administrators, etc... It is not my intention to reproduce them here, however, in the light of Super's statement relative to the implementation of a self-concept and self-actualization in an occupation, one cannot but wonder about the state of counselling in schools and the counselor as a professional in schools.

Having seen the definitions of self-percept and self-concept, it might be useful to quickly review the theory of self-concept development. Against the background of Buehler's "life stages": growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline and Miller and Form's Career Patterns, we find that adolescence is the stage of emergence of a self-concept although the total process begins at birth. It is the period of exploration, beginning with the exploration of self and work in the home. This period of exploration extends to the school, where the curriculum itself in much of its content and purpose is exploratory. Orientation courses, group work sessions, ideally including self-analysis and studies of educational and

occupational opportunities, are key steps. Many students, even as late as in the graduate or professional school, still need a great deal of orientation to themselves and to their prospective field of study. The content and length of the program of study for school counsellors is most important at this stage of exploration.

Exploration may continue in a variety of situations including part-time or summer work. After school, the period of transition from the school to the world of work is known as the period of reality testing, a second key point in vocational self-concept development. In a counsellor education program, the supervised practicum constitutes a vital link between the theory and its application. It is often described as the floundering or trial process, where there is an attempt to implement the self-concept. It can also be called the "internalization process", beginning with assessment: assessment of self and assessment of the acquired knowledge, assessment of technical or professional competence, of the work load, of work attitudes, of work values. It is a period of adjustment: adjustment to the new or developing self, adjustment to others including co-workers and superiors. This assessment and adjustment are a bringing into consciousness, a developing of awareness of self and others, leading to acceptance of self and others, ending in a responsiveness to others. Further, reality testing begins to assess the importance of security, of advancement, of status, of role in the profession and in the community.

These stages of exploration and reality testing are followed by the period of <u>establishment</u>, where the self-concept is further modified and implemented. This phase is characterized by further stock-taking, increased stability, under the multiple influence of increasing age, seniority, income, family responsibilities, professional relationships, community participation, etc.

It is therefore extremely important that self-concept development counsellor be somewhat crystallized before this stage. At the moment, it seems that most counsellors do not have the opportunity to explore and do the reality testing that precedes the establishment phase. They are thrown into the schools without adequate knowledge of themselves and of the youth they are expected to assist. They have little knowledge of the world of occupations. The stage of establishment contains most of the steps of exploration, reality testing and establishment all in one, an impossibility from a developmental point of view. The establishment phase is followed by the "maintenance phase, the period of preservation of the self-concept, or as Super called it "being nagged by the self-concept". Maintenance leads to the years of decline and the adjustment to the new self in retirement.

In my view, the critical points in self-concept development as a counsellor are the exploratory, the reality testing and the establishment stages of vocational self-concept development. These are the periods when the Department of Education philosophy on selection and education of counsellors has its greatest influence, when the content and extent of the counsellor education program irreversibly molds the counsellor, when the working conditions as a counsellor lead to final crystallization of the counsellor's self-concepts and self-concept system.

This is why I believe some provincial programs have impeded vocational self-concept development in school counsellors, or I might say that the good counsellors in Ontario schools have grown and developed in spite of the Department's theory on counsellor self-concept development. Similarly, some university programs of counsellor education have inadvertently led to the other extreme, namely that of preparing counsellors mainly through psychology and more specifically clinical psychology. The Ontario system

among others educated teachers. Some University programs educated psychologists Are there not really three occupations, three roles: teachers, counsellors, and psychologists? Are they not distinctive? Admittedly, there are indeed "grey zones", areas of overlap, especially since the counsellor is an educator. He is an educator, but different from the teacher, who in the main, and in the reality of today's curriculum demands, is an instructor in subject matter. The subject matter of learning in the case of the counsellor however, is the learner himself. The counsellor is a specialist, who concentrates on the learner himself, who is a specialist in the decision-making process, who is concerned with the decisions of the learner.

In terms of ideals to be reached, could there not be programs for the education of counsellors that would avoid the extremes? In the light of current thinking and research findings, is it not possible to develop programs that would lead to the development of the identity counsellor, which as "educator" is not a teacher, which as "counsellor" in individual and group counselling relationships is not a clinical psychologist?

Self-percepts leading to the self-concept counsellor can be deduced from the role a counsellor ought to play. Mathewson"s volume Guidance Policy and Practice which Wrenn characterized as the best available "philosophically, psychologically and educationally", suggests the functions of counsellors. Others, such as Truax, the California State Department of Education, also from the United States, and Cosgrave whose publication I consider the most important Canadian document on the subject, although at mild variance with one another, are sufficiently in accord with one another on major functions of counsellors to warrant their acceptance. In summary, the counsellor is a specialist in the decision-making process whose role can be depicted by a range definition such as the following:

1) assistant to students with educational, vocational, personal and/or social problems:

2) consultant to teachers and administrators referring students;

3) interpreter of guidance practices to teachers, administrators, parents, other professions;

4) researcher on matters pertinent to student development: educational, vocational, personal and social; researcher in test development and validation; researcher in interviewing and counselling techniques; researcher in counselling effectiveness;

5) advisor to the School Board in matters within his sphere of competence;

6) consultant to employers - government, industry and commerce, in matters relevant to the employ of graduates and their needs;

7) assistant to the Director of Student Personnel Services and other special services.

Counsellors, counsellor educators, and employers, may not agree entirely on the content and the extent of programs of study that would best lead to vocational self-concept development of counsellors. Each might tend to emphasize that area of specialization most conducive to the fulfilment of its own needs. However, a great deal of writing on the subject of the education of the counsellor does indicate agreement on the major considerations. There seems to be little doubt that the ideal program would be multidisplinary, drawing mainly upon the knowledge and experience of education, psychology, philosophy and sociology. Most of them insist that the program of study, for adequate professional development, must be at the graduate level, the concensus being at least two year's duration, on a full-time basis, beyond the first baccalaureate, for the mass of opportunities available, in other words, the ... A. level or its equivalent, and the Doctorate degree for the positions of leadership in the field.

Counsellors, as qualified and competent professionals distinguishable from the teachers and administrators and other professionals in the school with whom they share the partial responsibility for the education of the student,

are not just born counsellors. The content of the program of study contributes no small measure to their self-concept development. The content of the program, drawing from several disciplines, should probably be based on a baccalaureate including the humanities, philosophy, a certain amount of science and social science. The graduate degree at the Master's level should be developed around the core from psychology which is the "principal source of scientific understanding of the individual and of the techniques for assessment and counselling". A concentration of undisputed importance, I believe, would be some courses drawn from education. The criticism in some quarters that counsellors, drawn from non-teacher ranks know too little about education and educational problems, may be well founded. Without exaggerating the importance of such courses, it seems desirable that the counsellor should at least be familiar with the theory, history, administration and organization of education. I think, further, especially with today's emphasis on group guidance, that practice <u>teaching</u> under supervision would be an asset. This recommendation is not to be construed as a concession that counsellors should be teachers. Upon psychology and education, the two major concentrations, courses in economics, especially Canadian economy, and its implications for manpower utilization and mobility, courses in social science, especially the study of groups, their differences and similarities in terms of racial, cultural, religious, and other factors, appear to be highly relevant.

The most important part of the program would of course be the practicum under supervision. This is the area found most lacking by counsellors in surveys of their evaluation of their training. La Corporation des Conseillers en Orientation Professionnelle de la province de Quebec requires from graduates applying for membership evidence of at least 450 hours of supervised practicum, within the three-year graduate program taken in a recognized university.

The program would not be complete without some exposure to research. This requirement, built on courses in statistics and experimental design, including test construction and experimental methods, is a necessity. The present status of counselling can only be improved by much needed research, and who, but the counsellor, should do it? One area, among others, needs research; our assessment or appraisal techniques. Counselling without appraisal is hazardous. Appraisal without adequate instrumentation is ridiculous Oh!, we have tests, measuring intelligence, aptitudes and personality traits, interest inventories, inventories of study habits and attitudes, and the like, however, for the most part they are but Canadian adaptations of American tools. Good as they are, are we satisfied with them? Counsellors must be equipped to perform some of the research in measurement. There are of course several other areas where more research is necessary.

The counsellor, - professional - must have the maturity, the self-confidence, the self-respect, required of professionals in other disciplines. Can we be satisfied with less? Vocational self-concept development in law, medicine, the ministry, is not left to chance, nor is it left to the care of another profession. They are older, well-established professions, maybe we could learn from them.